

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

I. Amendments to the Claims

Independent claims 44, 50, 51 and 57 have been amended to clarify features of the claimed invention and to further distinguish the claimed invention from the references relied upon in the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejections discussed below.

In addition, dependent claims 46, 47, 53 and 54 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

Claims 44-57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over various combinations of the Applicant Admitted Prior Art (AAPA), Wang (NPL Adaptive Frame/Field Coding for JVT), and NPL Draft ITU-Rec. H.264. These rejections are believed clearly inapplicable to independent claims 44, 50, 51, and 57 for the following reasons.

Amended independent claim 44 recites a method including obtaining a sequence of commands respectively assigning frame-indices to reference frames of blocks of picture data. Moreover, claim 44 recites obtaining information indicating a maximum number of frame-indices and determining a maximum number of field-indices to be double a value of the maximum number of frame-indices. In addition, claim 44 recites specifying (in a case where field decoding is performed on a block of picture data) a reference field (which is referred to

when decoding the block of picture data) according to a reference index extracted from a bit stream within a range of the determined maximum number of field-indices and according to a field-index.

The structure required by claim 44, enables the frame-indices to be used effectively at a maximum value, such that a maximum value of the field-indices is within the number obtained by doubling the maximum value of frame-indices.

Initially, Applicants note that the above-mentioned rejection relies on “P1T to P3B” as illustrated in Fig. 41B of the AAPA and “P1 to P3” as illustrated in Fig. 41A of the AAPA for disclosing limitations similar to those now recited in amended independent claim 44 (see page 6 of the Office Action). More specifically, the above-mentioned rejection appears to equate “P1T to P3B” and “P1 to P3” with reference indices, as recited in claim 44. The Applicants do not agree with such an assertion for the following reasons.

Contrary to the assertion in the rejection that “P1T to P3B” and “P1 to P3” are reference indices, it is respectfully submitted that “P1 to P3” and “P1T to P3B” are not reference indices illustrated in Fig. 38 or picture numbers.

The Applicants note that “P1 to P3” and “P1T to P3B” are not reference indices because Fig. 41B clearly illustrates a field component (i.e., P1T to P3B) when a reference picture is referred to as a field, and Fig. 41A, illustrates a frame component (i.e., P1 to P3) when a reference picture is referred to as a frame. Thus, the “P1T to P3B” and the “P1 to P3” cannot be equated to the claimed reference indices, as recited in claim 44.

However, even if “P1 to P3” and “P1T to P3B” were considered to be reference indices, there is still no portion of the AAPA that discloses or suggests (i) obtaining information

indicating a maximum number of frame-indices, (ii) determining a maximum number of field-indices to be double a value of the maximum number of frame-indices, and (iii) specifying a reference field according to a reference index extracted from within a range of the determined maximum number of field-indices and according to a field-index, as recited in claim 44.

Furthermore, no portion of Wang or ITU-Rec. H.264 discloses or suggests (i) obtaining information indicating a maximum number of frame-indices, (ii) determining a maximum number of field-indices to be double a value of the maximum number of frame-indices, and (iii) specifying a reference field according to a reference index extracted from within a range of the determined maximum number of field-indices and according to a field-index, as recited in claim 44.

Therefore, because of the above-mentioned distinctions it is believed clear that claim 44 and claims 45, 48 and 49 that depend therefrom would not have been obvious or result from any combination of the AAPA, Wang and ITU-Rec. H.264.

In light of the discussion above, the combination of the AAPA, Wang and ITU-Rec. H.264 does not provide the above-mentioned result of enabling the frame-indices to be used effectively at a maximum value, such that a maximum value of the field-indices is within the number obtained by doubling the maximum value of frame-indices, because the combination of the AAPA, Wang and ITU-Rec. H.264 fails to disclose or suggest (i) obtaining information indicating a maximum number of frame-indices, (ii) determining a maximum number of field-indices to be double a value of the maximum number of frame-indices, and (iii) specifying a reference field according to a reference index extracted from within a range of the determined maximum number of field-indices and according to a field-index, as recited in claim 44.

Furthermore, there is no disclosure or suggestion in the AAPA, Wang and/or ITU-Rec. H.264 or elsewhere in the prior art of record which would have caused a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the AAPA, Wang and/or ITU-Rec. H.264 to obtain the invention of independent claim 44. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 44 and claims 45, 48 and 49 that depend therefrom are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

Amended independent claims 50, 51 and 57 are directed to a decoding apparatus, a coding method, and a coding apparatus, respectively and each recite features that correspond to the above-mentioned distinguishing features of independent claim 44. Thus, for the same reasons discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 50, 51 and 57 and claims 52, 55 and 56 that depend therefrom are allowable over the prior art of record.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance and an early notification thereof is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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